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INFORMATION CONCERNING RAOUL WALLENBERG

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[Article by Nikolay Nefedov: "Who Is Responsible for the Wallenberg Tragedy?"]

[Text] Responding to the request of A. Kalinskiy, author of the article "Tayna Raulya Vallenberga" [The Raoul Wallenberg Secret] (NOVOYE RUSSKOYE SLOVO, 28 January 1979) for any information relating to the kidnapping of Swedish diplomat R. Wallenberg by SMERSH ["Smert shpionam"--Death to Spies] agents and his imprisonment in Soviet jails, I would like to relate everything told to me by a former interpreter attached to the Swedish Embassy in Budapest. I might mention that I am not adding very much new to the facts presented by former Soviet prisoner A. Kalinskiy, but nonetheless I feel that any additional information on the kidnapping of R. Wallenberg is still valuable.

In the mid-1950's I became acquainted in Hamburg with the merchant German Krisko, who had just left the Soviet Union where he had spent approximately 10 years in Lubyanka and the Vladimir Prison. According to Krisko his kidnapping by SMERSH to a certain degree was tied in with the kidnapping of R. Wallenberg. Here is the history of G. Krisko: he lived in Riga but just prior to the beginning of WW II he went to Yugoslavia where he was involved in various commercial operations. The developing war found him in Hungary. By the end of the war he was working as an interpreter in the Swedish Embassy in Budapest. Krisko was fluent in Russian, German, and French but in actuality the Embassy only needed a Russian interpreter. The fact was that after Hungary declared war on the USSR, the Soviet representation was forced to leave Budapest and the Swedish Embassy took on the protection of Soviet interests.

Krisko had numerous occasions to meet Wallenberg when there was a need for the Russian language for translation of documents and requests, as well as for oral translation for Russian refugees--former Soviet citizens fleeing from the advancing Red Army and who had reached Hungary via Poland and Rumania--seeking protection against the tyranny of German and Hungarian powers. I use the term "former Soviet" since those seeking assistance from the

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Swedish Ambassador, to the great amazement of the Swedes, did not at all want to return to the socialist "paradise" and naively requested that they be sent to Sweden.

I became friendly with Krisko and, when we met later in Germany, we saw each other every day. During our chats we often returned to his "road of sorrow" and the kidnapping of R. Wallenberg so I remember his tale well.

Soon after the Red Army took Budapest in early 1945, four SMERSH agents dressed in regular Red Army uniforms seized Krisko near the Swedish Embassy, tossed him into a car, and took him to some commandatura on the outskirts of Pest. Here after interrogation they tossed him into a cellar full of prisoners of various nationalities packed in like sardines: Greeks, Spaniards, Rumanians, Yugoslavs, and others.

According to Krisko, R. Wallenberg was also kidnapped the same day or a day later. After two days Krisko was hauled to an airport and placed on a large transport aircraft. There were several dozen foreign prisoners already aboard, among whom Krisko recognized Raoul Wallenberg who recognized him and nodded his head. He looked buoyant probably thinking his arrest was a misunderstanding. How could he even think that he would never again see Sweden, never again see his relatives. But, Krisko was unable to talk to the diplomat since the guards armed with automatic weapons--one guard per prisoner--refused to allow any conversation.

The aircraft landed several hours later at a Moscow airport and the prisoners were taken to the Lubyanka. Here Krisko was placed in solitary where he remained three years. During that time he was interrogated each week the first year and less as time went on by several investigators, including the head Chekist Abakumov. Although the Chekists accused Krisko of spying for Sweden, then England, then the USA, the interrogations centered on the activities of Raoul Wallenberg. The investigators were interested in what Russians had contact with him, i.e. that had requested help and they asked what help Wallenberg gave them and so on. They were also interested in the role the diplomat played in rescuing Jews, as was described in detail by A. Kalinskiy in his article.

Although Krisko was in solitary he was able to find out in a roundabout manner that Wallenberg was also there in the Lubyanka. By the way, even the investigators talked about that. Trying to get the necessary confession from him, they said, for example, that there was no sense holding back since Wallenberg had already confessed the day before, supposedly.

After three years of imprisonment at the Lubyanka, Krisko was taken to Vladimir Prison. There was no trial of any kind but he remained nonetheless in a difficult situation for in excess of 10 years. He was also in solitary at the Vladimir Prison. After Adenauer succeeded in achieving the freedom of German prisoners of war and individuals deported during the war, Krisko being a German subject was sent from the jail to a repatriation camp, then to West Germany a week later.

Having arrived in Germany, Krisko visited the CIA office in Frankfurt and reported everything that he knew about Wallenberg's kidnapping. The Americans took down his testimony, but pointed out that since Wallenberg is a Swede and not an American, his case in essence was not applicable to them. Krisko later traveled to Stockholm. I do not recall with whom he spoke there. But, they did not demonstrate much interest in Sweden in Krisko's information then, i.e. in the mid-1950's. As former Polish army captain A. Kalinskiy notes, the principle enforced there was "don't anger the Kremlin in any way."

Naturally, it is Soviet leaders who are primarily responsible for the tragic fate of Raoul Wallenberg. However, their guilt does not take away the responsibility of the socialists sitting in the Swedish government for the fate of their diplomat. When information was received about the Soviet crime, they did everything possible to see that Wallenberg's kidnapping did not receive wide publicity, fearing an international scandal, and hoping to straighten things out on the sly. The instance with Krisko is evidence of this. Rather than widely publicizing his information and setting up a press conference, the Swedish bureaucrats hurried to get rid of him, announcing that a special commission to investigate the Wallenberg matter would visit Krisko in Hamburg. As to be expected, no such commission ever showed up. Five years ago Krisko suddenly died of a heart attack in Hamburg. His wife Yelena Osipovna and daughter Kristabella-Aleksandra are now living there. During Krisko's kidnapping his wife also was in Hungary.

Thus, even when it had become quite certain that R. Wallenberg was still sitting in a Soviet jail, the Swedish government limited itself to timid protests rather than presenting an ultimatum about the immediate release of their perfectly innocent diplomat and threatening the severance of diplomatic relations. But, as numerous examples showed, the Soviets only laughed at toothless protests.

Meanwhile, what else do you expect from a government headed by such people as the notorious Palme (he is now out of office). When President Ford gave the order that Vietnamese rescued from the Red terror would be given the opportunity to leave Vietnam, Palme censured this order. In his opinion, this was a very inhuman action since it separates people. . . . from relatives. If it were up to the Swedish humanist, without batting an eye he would drive the Vietnamese refugees back to their homeland, i.e. in actuality to communist extermination camps. And, in September 1975 when a Spanish court sentenced five terrorists murderers--three communists and two Basque separatists to the death sentence for the base murder of five policemen, Palme jumped on the Spanish government, requiring immediate release of the murderers since this would leave the children without fathers and the wives without husbands. He recalled his ambassador from Madrid and even required that diplomatic relations be broken with Spain. And, when the Soviet government kidnaps and holds an innocent Swedish diplomat for decades in its jails (and possibly has already killed him), the Swedish Prime Minister then puts his finger to his lips and says "not so loud, don't irritate the Soviets, don't ruin detente."

Absolutely not. They might not allow Swedish tourists to see Leningrad, and Moscow and the Swedes would be deprived of the opportunity to leave their kroner in Soviet hotels, restaurants, and Beryozkas. . . .

It is significant that on 14 June 1945 when SMERSH agents in Berlin kidnapped the Danish Dr. Alexander Tomsen, representative of the international Red Cross and sent him to Butyrki jail, Danish government bureaucrats did just the same thing as the Swedes--in spite of the furor on the part of relatives and his brother, an American army officer, everything was done in Denmark to insure that the doctor's kidnapping did not receive wide publicity. Dr. A. Tomsen was found guilty of espionage and sat in Vorkuta for 10 years. But, his fate was better than that of Raoul Wallenberg. He was freed and returned to Denmark.

. . . The secret of the Swedish diplomat's disappearance came to light a long time ago. One secret remains: is Raoul Wallenberg alive or have his tragic days already ended? And when, where, and how?

We trust that regardless of how the Soviet executioners attempt to hide traces of their crime the time will come when the crime will come to light.

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